THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Shri Rohit Bhujbal who is a member of Valsad division of WWF India has made certain comments about the Sarus Cranes in his individual capacity but the Chief Wildlife Warden, Gujarat State has reported that no death of Sarus Cranes has been noticed/reported in the water bodies around Surat in the recent past;

(b) State Government is taking following actions to preserve the vanishing species of the cranes:

(i) Improvement of water bodies by de-silting and making pollution free.

(ii) Increasing the prey base for birds in the water bodies.

(iii) Avoiding disturbance around water bodies.

(iv) Developing educational and awareness programmes for people residing around these water bodies.

(v) Introducing rewards for the people providing information regarding damage to birds and their natural habitat.

Preservation of Kaziranga National Park

1437. SHRIMATI. BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards a news item captioned "Concern over exodus for fauna from Kaziranga National Park", published in the Assam Tribune dated 12th February, 1999;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to protect and preserve Kaziranga as the natural habitat of the Rhino; and

(c) if not, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) There is no exodus of fauna from Kaziranga National Park due to shortage of green grass. Occasional straying out of rhinos take place to adjacent village and raide the crop etc. and return back

to the national park. This straying out animals is a normal phenomena and not because of shortage of forage inside the park. The population of rhino has increase from 1164 during 1993 census to 1552 during 1999 census. Preventive measures are taken against poaching by arranging regular and intensive patrolling by forest staff. Rhino is placed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, thus getting the highest level of protection against hunting and commercial exploitation. Making highlands where the animals can stay safely during floods is one of the major component of the action of the park. The Government of India have released following central assistance for Kaziranga National Park under the Centrally sponsored scheme "Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries".

Year	Release Rs. in lakhs
1997-98	50.89
1998-99	50.85
1999-2000	0.44

Bureaucrats Replacing Scientists

1438. SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of posts in the Ministry which were originally held by qualified scientists, have been replaced by bureaucrats;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to reverse such a trend and bring back scientists who are technically and academically qualified for such category of posts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.